

How can public authorities monitor private social service providers?

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Aim: Can conditions for effective monitoring of private social service providers be said to exist in Sweden today? More precisely, this study investigates who is responsible for monitoring private providers (nationally and locally) within elder care, and what tools for quality assessment are being used.

Methods: The empirical sources of information are comprised of documents from public agencies, interviews with officials in these agencies, and a web-based survey to municipalities to collect information on local methods of monitoring. Content analysis of the material is conducted in order to find out how monitoring of the services is done.

Findings: The division of labor is not always clear between the national and local level, which complicates monitoring of elder care services, and local methods vary substantially between local authorities. The focus lies on structural and procedural quality, while outcome quality is rarely monitored.

Conclusions: Taken together, the results illustrate that current conditions are not effective for monitoring care quality in Swedish elder care today.